

# A Letter to Parents on Sand and Water Play



## What We Do and Why

Although you're probably used to your children splashing in the bathtub and digging in a sandbox at the playground, you may be surprised to know that the sand and water area is an important part of our classroom. This is because sand and water aren't just fun – they're also a natural setting for learning.

When children pour water into measuring cups, they gain a foundation for mathematical thinking. When they drop corks, stones, feathers, and marbles into a tub of water, they observe scientifically which objects float and which sink. When they comb sand into patterns, they learn about both math and art.

We encourage children to experiment with these materials and as they do, we ask questions that encourage them to think about what they are discovering:

- “Why do you think the wet sand won't turn the wheel?”
- “How did the water change when we added the soap flakes?”
- “Does the sand feel different when it's wet?”
- “How many of these measuring cups of water will it take to fill this quart pitcher?”

## What You Can Do At Home

In addition to your child's everyday experiences with sand and water at home, you may want to find some places in your home where your child can play regularly with sand and water in the same ways we do at school. If you choose to do this, be prepared for some messes. Spills and stray sand are natural byproducts of children's enthusiastic play?

Here are some thoughts on setting up for sand and water play at home:

- Water play can be set up at the bathroom or kitchen sink. A large towel should be laid on the floor. If the sink is high for the child, a stool or stand can be provided. Outdoors, a small pool, tub, or old baby bath can be used.
- A dishpan can be used as a miniature sand box.. Your child could use this sandbox on a table, on the floor, or even resting on the lap. Collect small items for the miniature sand box such as shells, plastic animals, coffee scoops, etc.
- If a sandbox is not available outdoors, a dirt hole can be dug for sand play. Indoors, a plastic tub can be filled with sawdust or aluminum pie crust beads.

Giving children an opportunity to play with sand and water on a regular basis helps them develop their minds and bodies in a relaxing and enjoyable way.